1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

535 that time I got several of the accompanying songs, the texts of which I hope may be published later. At this time I wish only to point out the important place in the social life of the village which the dance occupies, with reference both to ceremonial and to [821] recreation. Whenever 'the moon makes a basket' (*osaĩ yi tunga ohumba*),[1] there is apt to be a great urge for rhythmic expression. [533] The drums begin to throb, the leader's voice is heard in invitation:

We-lele, we-lele wiya,
Oh light ones, oh light ones, come,
Usiki woñoma Kaluyua.
The beater of the drum (is) Kaluyua.

Then the dancers reply with the same words as a refrain:

We-lele, we-lele wiya,
Usiki woñoma Kaluyua.

The invitation is not given in vain. More and more feet join the shuffling, stamping rhythm, more voices join the chorused invitation; the throbbing mounts as perhaps another drummer or two join in, and soon other songs supersede the invitation now no longer necessary. Dance follows dance, each with its appropriate song, running the gamut of the emotions from ribaldry to pathos, according to the dancers' moods. The dancing will continue nearly all the night and may be resumed on the three or four [527] subsequent nights. After the harvest is gathered and there are no immediate agricultural labours, and if there happens to be little or no government work required at the time or in the region, dances may begin of an afternoon and last through two or three days and nights.

524 There are a number of games involving either agility or quick wits, or both, which are also played on moonlight nights, both by children and by adolescents. The adults do not join in except in some games which involve dancing. A simple one called *Ka limbua limbua* (Not forgotten) is played by either a large or small group. The children have many games. One which is played either by day or by night, called either *Cimbamba co lia* (The night hawk ate him) or *Mai* (Mother) *Cisangu*, has been fully described by Hambly,[2] with the transcription of its songs arranged by Dr. Herzog.

[1] When the moon is full it 'makes a basket', i.e. is large and round like a basket-basket.

[2] Hambly, op. cit., p. 216 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1934-1940) 1940 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

On nights when there is little or no moonlight, the evening gatherings in the village sometimes, although not always, follow the sex division, with the men and boys in the *onjango*, and the women and girls at one or more of the kitchens. Discussion of affairs, with youth listening to age, is the usual order, but the time is often passed in the recital of folk-tales or in propounding riddles.

Riddles are more especially a field of youth but age also enjoys hearing the answers given. A favourite occupation of the men, especially by day, is *ocela*, a game known all over Africa and in other parts of the world as well.[1] Junod calls it 'the national game of Africa'.[2]

The Ovimbundu have brought recreation to the service of their work. Europeans are often irritated by the amount of conversation which Ovimbundu carry on during working hours, but on consideration it may be found that were it not for the conversation and other psychological aids, the work might be quite unendurable. This is especially the case with regard to road work and many types of contract labour. Road songs and work songs are of real help in keeping up morale and in prolonging endurance. Most of them seem to have been developed in the days of the caravan trade, but they have not been forgotten and are now used on many occasions.

A word about ceremonial occasions before leaving the social life of the village. Some rites and ceremonies are celebrated so quietly that they are not even social occasions. Most of them, however, are very social. This is especially true of funerals and post-mortuary rites. During visits to Ngendo I was able to witness two post-mortuary rites and the funeral of an important person of a near-by village. Other ceremonial occasions, such as weddings and a return from a trading expedition, also call for much sociability, but funerals and post-mortuary rites are the social occasions which occupy the most time and attention and make for the greatest conviviality.

[1] Known under the name *Mancala*, which is evidently a Bantu word, or taken from one; cf. the Umbundu *oku mangala*, to play. Hambly mentions *ocela*, op. cit., p. 219. See also Nevinson, op. cit., p. 91. The *New Standard Dictionary* (Funk and Wagnalls) attributes to Arabian origin both the game and the word *Mankalah*.

[2] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 345 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

178 936 of marriage through all these changes, whether with or without the trial marriage, is a testimony to the vitality of their culture.

883 Young people of the same age-groups are thrown constantly more closely together during adolescence in all their activities and in all aspects of their life. Strengthening of the age-groups is therefore to be expected. New names are taken at this time and the names received at birth discarded so far as possible. Boys used to go off together on hunts, on trading expeditions, &c. The girls work more individually in the fields, but are together in such communal labours as harvests. The preparation of food allows them more sociability and they have the additional advantage of congregating in kitchens not only for meals, but for the night as well. Ceremonial and social occasions are always opportunities for those of the same age-groups to get together. There is a limited amount of fagging of the immediately inferior age-group, but it is not institutionalized save where initiation camps have entered the picture.

883 535 533 Folk-lore, music, and the dance have very important roles in the education of the young. The Bantu are probably among the most naturally musical of all peoples and the Ovimbundu are perhaps excelled by few other Bantu. Their vocal ability is certainly superior to that of several of their immediate neighbours. Many of their songs are sung in connexion with dances. Other musical forms are road and work songs. Dancing is much enjoyed during adolescence but by no means only at that time, for it is learned in early childhood, very soon after walking, and continued on through life as long as the man or woman can get about unaided. It is a great sight to see toddlers, hardly more than able to walk, climb down off their mothers' backs and try a few steps at dancing; or again, to see a wizened and white-haired old man or woman step out and execute a *pas seul* on some ceremonial occasion. The adolescents, however, enjoy their dancing most, and they are the originators of most of the new steps and new dances which appear from time to time. The dance is of great importance to Umbundu life: social, educational, and ceremonial.

It remains to speak briefly of two institutions, neither of which is practised extensively throughout the country, nor does either seem to be a typical or integral part of Umbundu culture. These are the institutions of initiation at puberty, and the communistic order of the *vakuacisoko* (lit. 'those of the set').

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

have for several years agreed to be the most effective. This is the method whereby babies learn their own language, a method which competent African teachers can easily understand and have adapted with good results.

Physical education and recreation would seem to be a simple matter among a people which spends so large a proportion of its time in out-of-doors occupations and one which, again, has almost universally good posture, and a large proportion of which is of good physique. Comparing the Ovimbundu with their neighbours to the north, the Ovimbundu are greatly superior both in physique and in posture. Umbundu forms of physical education are responsible at least in part. Carrying loads on the head, which is done by all ages and both sexes, has also had undoubted influence. Most important of all is the dance. The dance is very good physical exercise but it is much more than that. It is more than mere recreation. 'The dance is in most primitive societies an important factor in maintaining group solidarity.'[1] This is certainly true of the Ovimbundu. There is nothing which can take its place. It is doubtful whether the solidarity of any group of Ovimbundu can be firmly established or long maintained without the dance. They do adopt various foreign forms of recreation, but the dance meets a deeper need. Whatever new exercises and games may be introduced the physical educator cannot afford to neglect indigenous forms.

Music is of great importance to the Ovimbundu. The Church and mission schools have made much use of this musical ability and bent. The great choirs which give such pleasing renditions of European classical and sacred music would do credit to schools or colleges in any part of the world.[2] Less use has been made of native music but it is still sung, and some teachers have taken real interest in it. Not having described the Umbundu musical forms it is not possible to extend this evaluation. However, it must be noted that European music has been supplied with Umbundu words, and very successfully in some instances. Contrary to the predictions of several authorities, the result, most emphatically, is not 'a kind of musical pidgin'.[3]

[1] Krige, 1936, op. cit., p. 336.

[2] See article by Elizabeth Scattergood Chalmers, 'The Music at the Jubilee', *Missionary Herald*, 1930, pp. 335–8.

[3] See E. M. von Hornbostel, 'African Negro Music', *Africa*, 1928, pp. 30–62. He offers some interesting suggestions on the use of drums. His conclusions on

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

576 *konyimo oko* are spoken. The literal interpretation of these words is "back there." Ngonga says the words actually mean "excuse my back."

827 576 Spitting in the vicinity of the house of the king or of the chief is not allowed. "If you did that in the old days, you would have to pay something." Some people spit near the hearth in their own houses. A man who spits in the road is expected to cover the spittle. No person would spit in the presence of the chief or of the king. A hand should be placed in front of the mouth by a person who is coughing or sneezing.

576 [851] Shortly after the birth of a boy or girl all who are on good terms with the parents greet them by saying *kalunga*. The word is repeated four times with clapping of the palms. When words have been imperfectly heard and the listener desires repetition it is customary to say *kuku* in an interrogative tone.

[264] No particular etiquette is observed when eating. Two or three children eat from one platter, helping themselves with their fingers to the mush or sweet potatoes.

Rules forbidding the preparation of food by menstruating women, likewise prohibitions relating to stepping over a person, are mentioned in discussing taboos and omens.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF PLAY, MUSIC, AND DANCING

524 182 533 The educational value of play lies in its imitation of the pursuits of adult life. Though there are specialists in music, dancing, and singing, these exercises are indulged in by everyone. Music, singing, and dancing are more than amusements, they are fundamental as coordinating forces in tribal life at all levels of culture (W. D. Hambly, Tribal Dancing and Social Development, London, 1926). [113]

Among the Ovimbundu *Cimbamba Co Lia* is a popular game for girls, who form a circle, join hands, and sing:

PART I

524 [535] *Omola una, ndo sile vekango, Cimbamba co lia* ("That little child was left in the desert, the nighthawk ate it"). At the word *Cimbamba* they begin to dance, facing from side to side in such a manner that they meet and bow. Some sing, *Cimbamba co lia* ("The nighthawk ate him"), and others respond, *Kalikisi* ("'tis the goblins"), as many times as they wish. Finally a return is made to the first words which are sung again. All musical transcriptions have been made by Dr. G. Herzog from my phonographic records.

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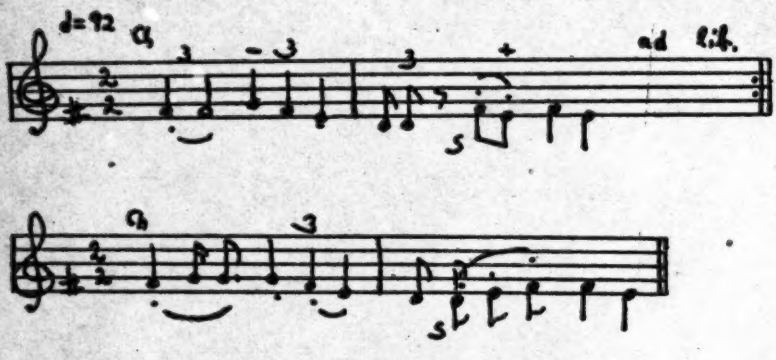

PART II

The children then form in a line holding each other. The leader is the mother and all the others are her children, except one who is the leopard. The last child in the line calls, *A mai, ongue yi ndia* ("Mother, the leopard will eat me"). Mother, *Ka yi ku li,* ("It will not eat you"). Child, *Yi lia utapi wovava* ("It is eating the water carrier"). Mother, *Ka yi ku li.* Child, *Yi lia utiañi wolohui.* Mother, *Ka yi ku li.* The one who represents the leopard now attempts to pass the outstretched arms of the mother in order to catch the child. Every time the leopard is foiled in his attempt to catch the child they all cry, *Ah-ah-ah Ka yi ku li.*

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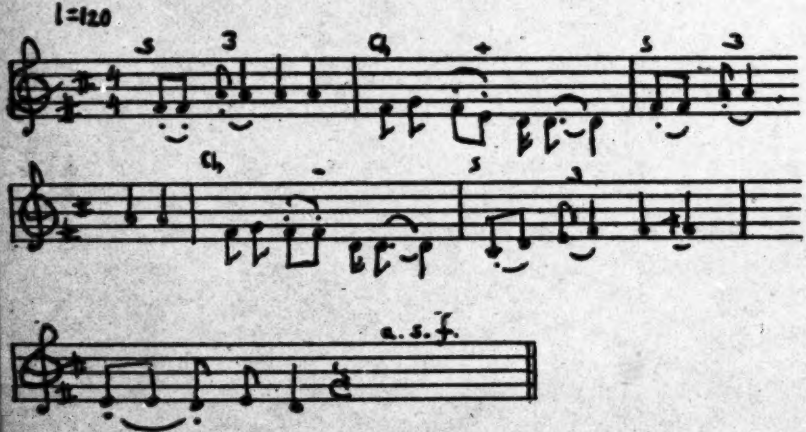

Eventually the leopard gets the last child and deposits it on the ground where it immediately begins to imitate the pounding of meal and to sing, *Fule, fule, fule, fule, kolohanda ko Luwa* ("Pound, pound, pound, pound on the rocks of Luwa"). This ditty, which is sung by women during their daily occupation of pounding maize on the

524 rocks, is repeated until all the children have been captured. Lastly the mother is caught and taken by the leopard to the bushes, where he hides her.

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The leopard goes back and picks up a handful of sand which is an imitation of meal. Each of the children pretends to pick up a handful of sand before going in search of the mother. The leopard

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3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

says, "Here's your mother." The children look and sing, "She's not there." They throw sand in that direction. The leopard repeatedly leads to places where the mother is not hidden, while each time the same words are repeated and sand is thrown. Finally the leopard leads the children to the place where the mother is hidden. Then the mourning song is changed to a glad dance. The children clap hands and sing, *Mai Cisangu weya. Mai Cisangu weya* ("Mother Cisangu has come").

After transcribing the music of this song Dr. Herzog reported, "The melodies are rather simple, moving within a restricted range, with a plain rhythm, the same short unassuming melodic fragment being repeated as long as the game may require it, or changed slightly to suit the words. It should be kept in mind that these are children's songs; other songs of the Ovimbundu are probably much more elaborate. The manner of singing songs by a solo and a responding choir is highly characteristic of African singing. Thirds as seen in the transcriptions on page 218 are often used in the music of west Africa.

"In the musical notations, *S* stands for Solo, *Ch* for the Choir. *A* as a sign above a note indicates that the tone is sung approximately a quartertone higher than noted. It indicates a short transitional tone of slight rhythmic or melodic significance and of uncertain pitch."

There is but one example of children's dolls in Field Museum's collection. This was obtained from a little Ocimbundu girl of Elende. The doll is made from a corncob which is draped in blue cloth of European origin such as women wear. My interpreter said that the dressing of dolls made from corncobs is a general custom at the time of cutting the corn. In view of the frequent occurrence of agricultural rites among Bantu Negroes, the use of dolls led me to inquire into the possibility of there being some kind of fertility cult associated with a corn-mother concept, but my inquiries met with negative results.

There is an Umbundu word for game (*omapalo;* plural, *olomapalo*) which is used for games in general. The verb *oku papala* means "to play." As a rule, male adults do not play games, but they have the game of mancala which is called *ocela*. This is difficult because it involves quick counting. Mancala has a wide distribution as shown by the fact that it occurs in Africa, Syria, the Malay Archipelago, South America, and the West Indies. At Dom Manuel in the southeast of Angola I saw an arrangement of holes in the ground which was used for this game. There were four rows of fourteen holes in each row. The counters were nuts from an oil palm.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

itself is *onoma*. The flat wooden drum without membrane is *ocingufu*, 534
the player of this drum is *usiki wocingufu* (Plate XXVII, Fig. 2). 463
The long tubular drums vary in length from 50 to 103 cm. At a funeral, four of these tubular drums, which are usually held between the legs or placed upright, are played in compound rhythm. A performer always warms the skin of the drum at a fire, and sometimes the pitch is altered by sticking a lump of wax on the membrane of a long drum, or on the sides of a wooden drum.

Dr. Herzog reports as follows, after transcribing several cylinders 533
of phonographic records of rhythms played on the long drum, and after examining motion pictures which were synchronized with the drumming (Plates XXV, XXVI).

"These motion pictures indicate the position of the performer's hands, and suggest that the sharply accented tones are produced by impacts from the phalanges. The higher notes so produced have been marked by notes above the line. A mark placed between notes indicates a very short rest.

"No. 1 (dictaphone record 3) represents the drumming of a young player, who is apparently still an apprentice, since his rhythm is very simple. The three forms of his playing given below were used interchangeably, and he shifted from one to the other without stopping. In the second form, the order of the sharp and of the plain beat is reversed. Otherwise, the sharp beat occurs, in the playing of all drummers, on the off beat. The rhythm of No. 2 (dictaphone record 15) is a little more varied because the player was changed. The drummer of No. 3 (dictaphone record 30) was the best performer in the neighborhood, according to Mr. Hambly; and his playing is the most interesting. The drum records consist of a small number of rhythms which are freely interchanged; the two predominating rhythms are given below. The moving pictures were made from this player's performance.

"The notations found here do not convey to the reader the bewildering complexity of African rhythm, for this appears only when a performance includes the use of several drums and musical instruments in conjunction with dancing."

From Ngalangi a large friction drum 120 cm long and 47 cm in 534
diameter was obtained. This instrument, which was the property [422]
of the village, was played only on public occasions. Apparently the drum had been hollowed from a log of wood, one end of which was left open while the other was covered with hide. To the inner side of this hide a long cane was attached. On the side of the drum

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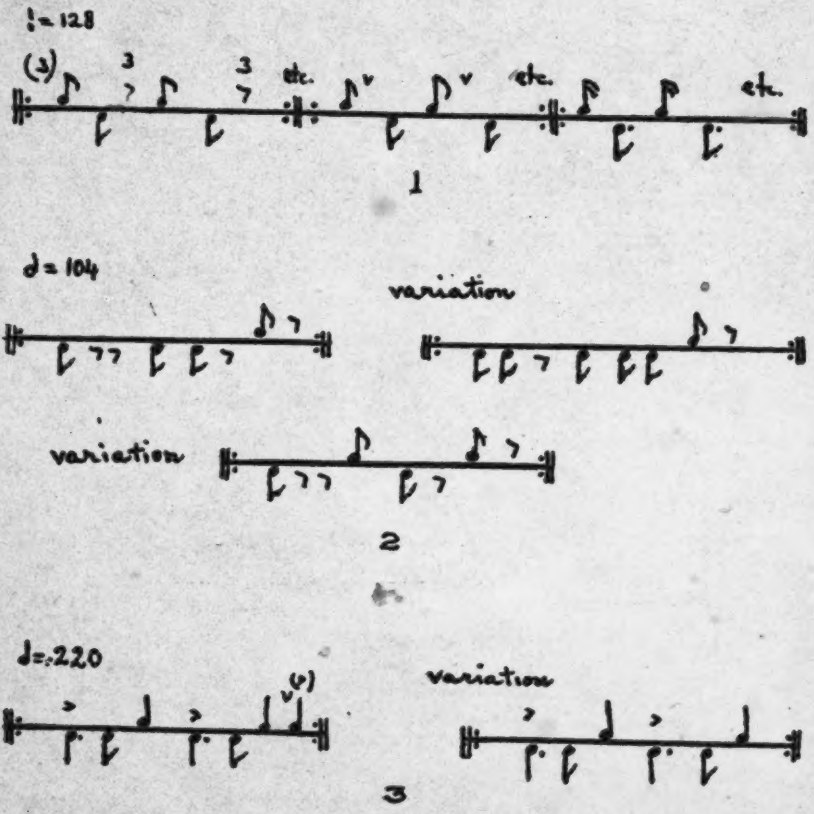

534 and in the middle was an oval aperture. The performer laid the drum on the ground and took his seat astride it. He dipped his right hand in a gourd of water, then rubbed his wet palm up and down the cane rod, which he could reach through the oval aperture. The sound of the rubbing on the rod was communicated to the membrane.

A short friction drum made at Elende measures 21 by 42 cm. One end of the drum is covered with hide kept taut by pegs of wood while the other end is open for the insertion of the player's hand. A cane rod is attached to the inside of the membrane. The [756] assistant of a medicine-man holds this instrument under his arm and plays during divination. The medicine-man sits on a stool shaking his divination basket (Plate XXIII, Fig. 2).

Rattles are of three kinds, and of these the more common are a small, long-necked gourd containing hard seeds, and a compound

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

rattle made by fixing seed pods on a stick. Rattles of the latter type are sometimes tied to the ankles during dancing and they usually form a part of the medicine-man's outfit (Plate XXII, Fig. 4). From Cangamba a basket rattle of dumb-bell form was obtained; the basket-work receptacles at each end of the connecting rod contain hard seeds (Plate XXII, Fig. 1).

At Bailundu three Ovimbundu flute players met a party of visitors whom they accompanied around the native village under the leadership of a chief. The men played the flutes continuously except when the chief was speaking. The wooden flutes varied in length from 20 to 50 cm. The instruments were end-played, and the smallest of them had seven stop-holes. The visitors were conducted from the village by this small orchestra which is a permanent guard of honor for the chief (Plate XL, Fig. 1).

At Cangamba the Vachokue have an instrument consisting of eight slats of wood which vary in length and thickness. These sounding boards are attached to two parallel cords which are kept tight by two assistants. The performer taps the wooden slats with two sticks terminating in balls of wax. This is the well-known marimba, but the gourds which are usually fastened under the slats of wood were absent in this instance.

The instrument *ocisanji* is played well by only a few men. It consists of a wooden board, often well carved, on which there are from eight to nineteen thin keys of metal. These can be pushed backward and forward in their bridge so as to alter the vibrating length and pitch of the note. The pitch may also be varied by placing small balls of wax on the under side of the keys. When the instrument is held between the palms the player's thumbs are in position for stroking the keys. Sometimes *ocisanji* is played inside a wide gourd (Plate XXII, Fig. 5).

The musical bow is called *ombumbumba*. The bridge, which is a small stone, or a piece of wood placed at one end of the bow, keeps the string taut. The gourd is tightly fastened to the bowstring with a loop of string. One end of the bow is sometimes placed in the player's mouth. The left hand holds the bow and presses the gourd to the body, then releases it a little from time to time in order to assist tone and resonance. The player holds in his right hand a reed which is tapped lightly on the bowstring, while the thumb and forefinger of the left hand are used occasionally in pressing on the string to alter its vibrating length (Plate XXII, Fig. 6).

534 Another musical bow named *ekolowa* is of simple construction, consisting of a strip of cane from 54 to 70 cm long and 2 cm wide. At each end of the cane is a projection. A string, when tightly stretched between these projections, pulls the cane into the form of a bow. The performer, placing one end of the bow in his mouth, plucks the string with his thumb and forefinger (Plate XXII, Fig. 7).

Two rubbing instruments are used by the Ovimbundu. *Ogolanda* is a large gourd with a slit in the top along which there is a board cut into sixteen notches. The rubbing of a short stick along these notches produces a sound which is greatly amplified by the gourd resonator. The second instrument of this type is in the form of a wooden bow having its thickest part notched for rubbing with a stick (Plate XXII, Figs. 3, 8).

533 Only specialists are skilled in composing songs, and both men and women are composers. The younger people sometimes go to the old people to learn songs which were popular a generation ago. There are no professional itinerant story-tellers.

There is a chant for funerals which has been quoted in the appropriate section, but no special wedding songs are used. The Ovimbundu have satirical songs humorously describing individual [626] foibles and peculiarities, and as usual in Negro communities a satirical song is feared by thieves, adulterers, or other offenders.

[726] In former days when men were on the warpath they sang, *Okaimbo ketu katito eteke tu lisanumbula tu tandako.* ("Our village is little today, we attack, we extend.") Another war song is *Ocisonde ci likoka ove o kasi vonjila tumdamo.* ("Red ant that creeps along, you who are in the way, get out.")

[484] When men on the march came to a camping ground occupied by another caravan, they sang as a challenge, *Cinene nye? Cinene onjamba kakuli okachama kavela ukuavo.* ("What is the largest? There is no animal largest. The largest is the elephant.")

During hauling and carrying, men sing, *Yende, yende chale, ocimboto lomala vaco.* ("Let it go, let it go, the crab, the frog, with its children.")

482 Lifting loads is always accompanied by noises which suggest that someone is injured. Part of the men make deep grunts to which their companions answer with prolonged groans.

INITIATION

867 Evidence bearing on initiatory rites in Angola shows that the 881 ceremonies are arranged as a process of incorporation into the

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP1

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OVIMBUNDU TRIBE

Fig. 1. Flute players, Bailundu. Fig. 2. Bark removed for making utensils, Elundo
Fig. 3. Girl, hair studded with brass nails, Elundo

[p.394]

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

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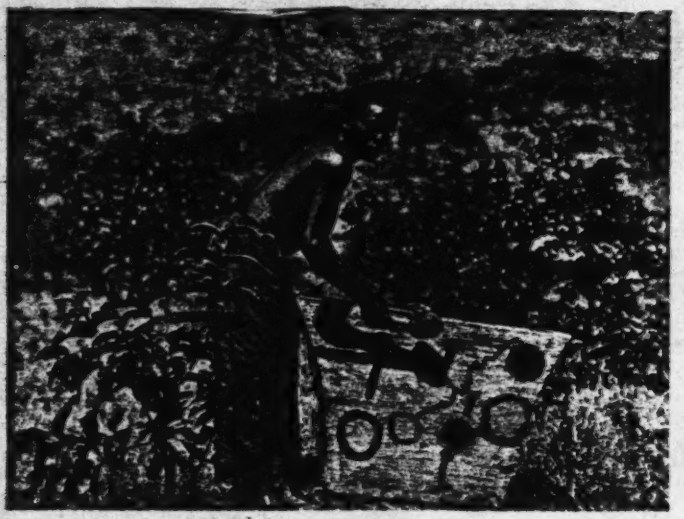

A

B

A. Player of the drum (ocingufu). B. Official flute players to a chief at Bailundu. (Photographs by courtesy of Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.)

[Facing p. 159]

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

At Caconda I obtained the basket of a medicine-man which contained 759
a human tibia, a hoe for digging in graves, and a round stone for pounding 791
the bone before mixing it with fat and charcoal. Medicine-men still make potions for internal use, and these are usually carried in small horns suspended round the neck, or the paste may be contained in the carapace of a tortoise. In every way the medicine-man is still functioning, and his tasks are fundamental to the social and religious life of the Ovimbundu.

At an early age children specialize in their play which has a bearing 868
on the business of life. Boys make wooden-tipped arrows, play at hunting, and shoot at tubers which are rolled along the ground. Girls take clay from the potters to fabricate their own small cooking pots, and young girls attempt the coiling of basketry.

Men are the musicians, and among these a high degree of specialization 533
is observed. In a large village there are likely to be only a few competent drummers, and only a few men who play the small iron-keyed instrument called ocisanji. Osaka is a ritual game played only by men, and only when a village headman or a king is dying. The ball (ombunje) is made by sewing 535
lizard skin over a hard spherical fruit about six centimeters in diameter. A 524
man continues to dance with this little ball clenched in his outstretched 755
hand, while another dancer hits the muscles of his arm to make him release the ball. This game is thought to give strength to the sick man. There is a transfer of the endurance of the dancers to the invalid.

Preliminary observation in some villages occupied by Ovimbundu is 197
disappointing in its suggestion of Europeanization. The foreign culture is, however, a thin veneer, and further research shows a strong persistence of indigenous custom and belief quite near to centers of Portuguese influence.

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6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

preceded by singing, and dancing. There are a certain number of 'school' songs as distinct from hymns, which are semi- or non-religious in nature, which are taught by the catechist and are sung on these occasions with other Umbundu traditional songs. There seems to be little composition of songs by present day Ovimbundu nor do they know popular Portuguese songs.

The school itself, the centre of these activities, is generally built of adobe bricks in the shape of a church. In any village where there is a fair number of school people it will be the largest building in the village and even in villages of mixed Christian and pagan population the school building tends to be in the centre of the village, a topographical reflection of the social significance of the catechist and the catechetical school. In the school men and women are separated, men on the right, women on the left, a custom also found in some Angolan parish churches.

The catechist's presence is a mark of the identity of the village. The catechetical school is the only institution which groups people of different domestic groups on a village-wide basis, and in which people participate in a wider set of social relations on a village and not on an individual basis, as people are linked to kinsmen, or to the post or to an employer. One can and does associate oneself with a village if one does not belong geographically to it but simply attends its school. Thus Fernando considered himself as belonging to the village of Ngolo Catolica whose catechetical school he attended, although his house was well away from the main village, being much nearer the Protestant village of Vila Graça, where indeed he had kinsmen. When I asked a woman where she lived she replied by giving the name of the village catechist. The only occasions on which a group of people represent one village *vis-à-vis* another are in connection with the travels of missionaries, and in the wedding feasts, which will be described in another chapter.

A missionary on leaving one village for another has his luggage carried by the school people of the village where he has been staying, who will march singing, with perhaps a boy banging on a drum. When they get to the next village they will be greeted at the entrance into the village by the catechist and